

Trentham Memories

Mary Bratby of Brook Road



Trentham Heritage Project

Mary spoke to two members of the Trentham Heritage project in January 2018, whilst she was in a nursing home. She was asked about her life in Trentham and below are some of her memories, along with her photos.

Mary lived in Trentham all her life. She was born and brought up at 20 Brook Road. She had an older and a younger sister.



Mary with her older sister Barbara and mother and grandmother



Outside 20 Brook Road

Her parents were Dorothy and Harry; her father was a builder. Brook Road was like a cul-de-sac then. There were a few houses in Brinsley Avenue. There was a field between their house & Brinsley Avenue. She remembers a beautiful beech tree that was chopped down to build houses. She added: ***“They ruined Trentham – it used to be a nice little village.”***



Mary in Brook Road c1938

The Wengers lived in The Priory. Mary and her friends used to play cricket in the nearby field. She remembered Mr Wenger [Adolph] riding on his horse, Conker, wearing a black cloak and trilby hat. He told them off because they were on private land. She thought he was frightening and strict. He had his own pew and hymn book in church.

Mary never went inside The Priory, but her mother did because they used to knit and sew for the soldiers during the 2nd World War; her mother always spoke of Mrs Wenger as “a very nice lady”. Their garden in Brook Road backed on to the Longton Brook, with a very long garden. Their neighbours were Mr and Mrs Stubbs. Mr Stubbs worked at the Hanford Sewage Works on A34.

She went to Trentham Primary School on the A34 opposite The Poachers Cottage. They used to sit on the pavement and play marbles. The school, Institute and other nearby buildings were all knocked down in the 1950s.



Her secondary school was St Dominic’s, Hartshill Bank, in Stoke.

Mary delivered newspapers along Barlaston Old Road; she said “**...it was all doctors and pot bank owners along there**”. But she received good tips at Christmas including pound notes. The newspapers were from a grocer’s shop at the top of Stuart Avenue on Longton Road, owned by Miss Machin.

The railway to Trentham Gardens, passed near the back of their house, and she remembered on Trentham Thursdays, when she was very young, that lots of visitors used to come to the gardens on the train. The railway also brought soldiers to Trentham Park during the 2nd World War. Mary remembered that some of the soldiers gave them oranges.

Mary said she had a very happy childhood.



Mary at the Milk Marketing Board,
Kingsley, The Brampton in 1959

At age 15 she started to work at the Milk Marketing Board on the Brampton, Newcastle. She left the Milk Marketing Board and went to work part-time as Verger at Trentham Parish church.

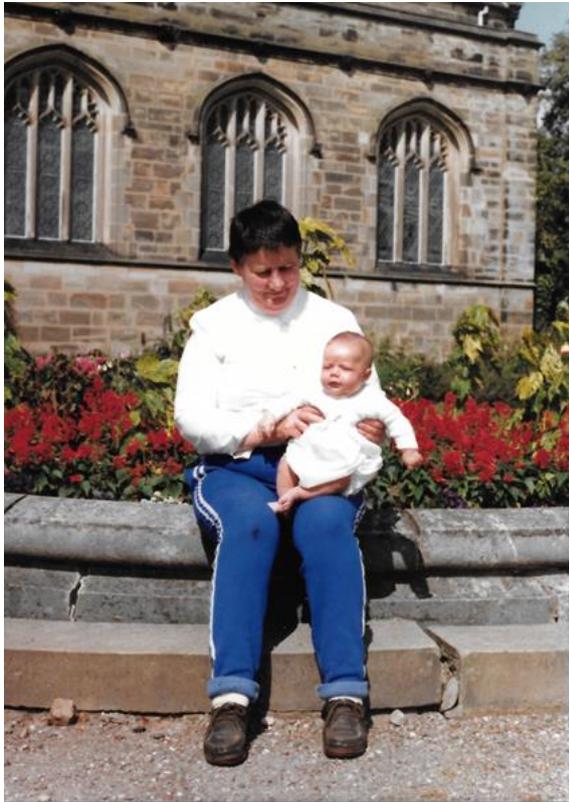


Mary as churchwarden at Trentham Parish Church in 1968

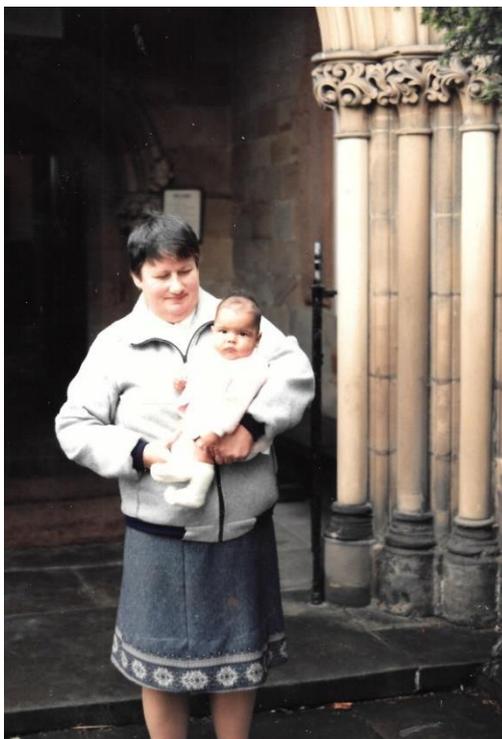


Mary in Trentham Gardens in 1977

It was the suggestion of the vicar's wife, Mrs Ramsden, that Mary become a foster parent. She looked after many babies and always kept the Silver Cross coach-built pram.



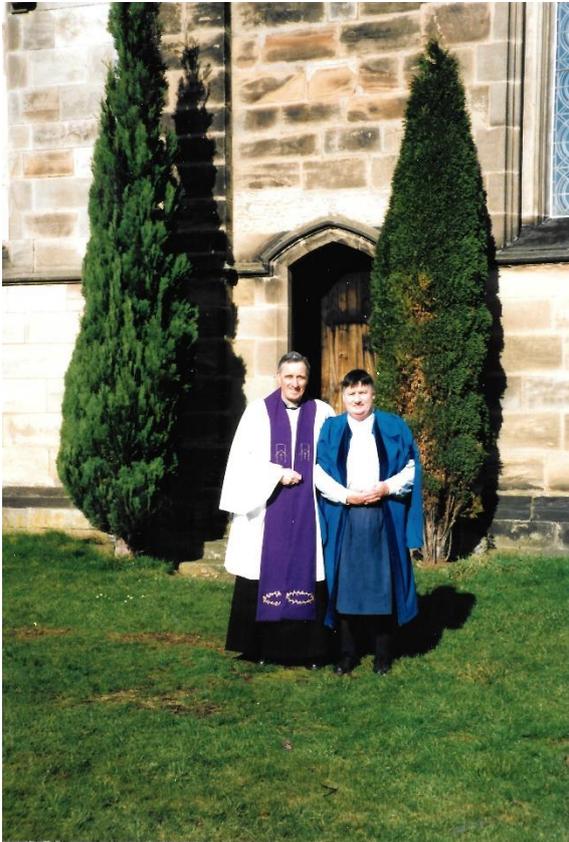
Some of the children that Mary fostered over the years



She had a house in Parkwood Avenue, off Boma Road. Brook Road and Parkwood Drive were the only two houses Mary ever lived in

She remembered Mr & Mrs Paget of Longton Road and their daughter Gwen. Nurse French lived in one of the cottages at Ash Green and was the local midwife and rode a bicycle. Her former neighbours were Mrs Stubbs, Mrs Walters, Mrs Wainwright, Mrs Hollier, Mrs Bebbington and Mrs Whitehurst. She was very friendly with Janet Norcop for many years.

She shopped at Pavitts in a house by Ash Green Garage. It was a grocer's that sold sweets etc. She was aware of Bickerton's in Brough Lane, but hardly ever visited there.



She regularly attended Trentham Church and was very fond of the vicar Mr Ramsden and later David Marsh; she mentioned that Nigel de Castiglione was fined for moving the font and pews.

Her final observation at the end of the interview was: *"Trentham is too big now. I remember when Pacific Road was just fields and there used to be seven farms in and around Trentham."*

Mary with Rev David Marsh in March 1996